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A Survey on Student Preferences of Facilities and Models of Accommodation at Kapasa Makasa University, Zambia

Nimrod Siluyele¹, Edward Nkonde², Malawo Mweemba³, Goodhope Kaluba⁴, Cleopas Zulu⁵

¹ Nimrod Siluyele, Lecturer and coordinator of student affairs, Kapasa Makasa University

² Edward Nkonde, Educational Administration and Management, Kapasa Makasa University

³ Malawo Mweemba, Lecturer Research Methods, Kapasa Makasa University

⁴ Goodhope Kaluba, Tutor, Kapasa Makasa University

⁵ Cleopas Zulu, Tutor, Kapasa Makasa University

Abstract

The main aim of the survey was to generate data on students' views on the preferred model of accommodation and the hostel facilities at the Kapasa Makasa University Campus in Zambia. Currently, the University offers a unique on-campus accommodation. Unlike the traditional student hostel arrangement in other public Universities in the country where hostel allocation is gender-specific, at the Kapasa Makasa University, the hostels are co-education. It is only the floors that are gender-specific. The possible modification of this arrangement is to go further and make flat-lets co-education. Co-education here means mixing male and female students in hostels of floors, or flat-lets. Data were collected through a five-point Likert scale that was self-administered and randomly distributed questionnaires to 300 students out of the student population of 560. In the survey, the one-way Anova test showed significant differences between students year of study on their preference for gender-specific hostels and floors. Although female students had a greater desire for living in a gender-specific hostel, when compared to male counterparts the difference was not statistically significant. For the floors the one-way Anova test showed a significant difference between students year of study on their preference for gender-specific floors. When the study asked students about the convenience of the on-campus accommodation, the majority preferred on-campus housing to off-campus model of accommodation. This preference was across gender and years of study. Currently, all students at Kapasa Makasa University stay on campus. The university offers free cooking facilities, bed space, internet, television and a fridge. There is also free transport to go into town that is 25kilometers away from campus. The survey involved questions that sought students satisfaction or preference on different arrangements of allocating of hostel floors, and also how they value different hostel facilities and services. The next part of the questionnaire asked students to express their views on -off-campus accommodation. They complained mostly of poor water reticulation, erratic supply of electricity and lax security.

Keywords: Satisfaction, Floors, On Campus, Off-Campus Model, On-Campus Model

INTRODUCTION

One of the factors that determine university students' academic performance is satisfying accommodation during their years of studying in a university. A lot of factors contribute to students' level of satisfaction for the offered accommodation. The majority of students would prefer to stay in hostels that are decent and cheap, Khozaei et al (2010). Researchers like Maina and Aji(2017) have postulated that student satisfaction in their accommodation usually includes rentals, room size, bathrooms, kitchen, laundries and auxiliary facilities like internet, security, electricity and water supply. Their research goes further to add issues of overcrowding, territoriality, cleanliness, noise and distance from academic facilities. Khozaei et al (2012) assert that an ideal student accommodation is in the mind of the student. Consequently a research that seeks students' perception of the type of accommodation and offered facilities is important. Many studies in different parts of the world have attempted to generate data on student satisfaction and preferences on model of accommodation and facilities offered. Taking Kapasa Makasa university campus as a case study, this research conducted a survey involving 255 out of 650 male and female students that reside in the campus. The university offers on-campus accommodation with hostel facilities and services that are mostly new since the campus is just a few years old. It was established in 2016 as a campus of the Copperbelt University an old institution in Zambia that is over 30 years old. Plans are underway to delink the institution from the Copperbelt University. Consequently, the need to increase student enrolment and concomitant accommodation will follow. The findings of this research will, therefore, inform the university management or private accommodation developers to construct structures that will offer student preferences to a large extent.

Lessons Learnt from the International Scene

In South Africa, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) published a report in 2011 on the status of student housing in South African public universities. The comprehensive study reports in parts, "Many of the students particularly those studying in our historically black institutions have been living in very poor conditions and this has often hampered their ability to succeed. We have also in the past witnessed boycotts and protests over the conditions in student residents" (DHET 2011:11).

The report has also admitted that government universities are overwhelmed by the massive demand for students' accommodation. There is a need for private accommodation providers to fill the gap that exists in the provision of accommodation as long as the private providers do not exploit the students. Oyentunji and Adidoye(2016:1) postulate a balanced view of this argument. They advocate for a win-win approach. They state that "the university management and private real estate investors/developers should invest more in student housing to reach a win-win situation where investors make a profit from their investment and the students enjoy a pleasant stay during their academic session".

In Nigeria, Azeez and Taiwo (2016), in their literature review have reported that student hostel accommodation has been one of the major challenges in the Nigerian tertiary institutions due to the student explosion in the student population. The report further reports that due to inadequate maintenance, there have been cases of students falling ill in the hostels as a result of poor sanitary conditions. Another study on the Nigerian situation by Oyentunji and Abidoye(2016) reports that student living options during their academic years include on-campus hostels, off campus apartments, privatized rented housing or simply commuting from one's home. Sanyal (1995) reports that in UK and USA governments are encouraging enrolments of more local students to reduce the pressure on on-campus residence. Sanyal (ibid) further cites examples of African Universities whereby 1995 there was exponential pressure on facilities on the on-campus model.

"In Uganda's Makerere University, no physical expansion has taken place for 20 years, sanitary and related facilities are over stretched. Madagascar reports much the same situation while in the University of Abidjan now has 22,000 students in buildings designed for 7,000. The University of Chad, which was built for 700 students, had 2,600 as of 1992. Another example is the University of Bangui which was established in 1969 with 300 students but has expanded to 4,000 people in 1991"

In Malaysia, Khozaei et al (2016) allude to the fact that many university students prefer to reside in hostels. The study further asserts that numerous studies have been conducted on college and university student lives, both on and off-campus in the past few years. Such studies have enhanced our understanding of various aspects of student life such as their coping strategies and the influence of residence halls on their behaviour.

One of the crucial factors that applicants of the university education look at is the provision of accommodation. This is important for many reasons. Some applicants prefer on-campus accommodation because it becomes cheaper and is more convenient than off-campus. Others prefer off-campus accommodation which is mostly offered by private developers and sometimes provides maximum comfort. However, sometimes off-campus accommodation may offer the worst model (DHET2011). Khozaei (2012) argues that the typical student accommodation is in their own minds or responses to a survey. It is this notion that has led to many studies by scholars on student housing preferences. The survey on student preferences of facilities and model of accommodation at the Kapasa Makasa University campus was conducted to generate data that would inform policymakers and accommodation developers on what type of housing to provide. The University which was opened in 2016 as part of the Copperbelt University currently has less than 700 students in four-degree programmes. It offers on-campus accommodation with facilities that are mostly new since the campus is just a few years old. Plans are underway to delink the campus from the mother institution.

Consequently, a need will soon arise to increase not only the number of students but also the accommodation and facilities. The imminent addition of student housing will surely need the generated data by this study.

METHODOLOGY

The data for the current study was driven by the need to understand the preference of student accommodation for a University located in the rural area of Muchinga Province of Zambia. The respondents to this survey were students accommodated in four hostels of Kapasa Makasa Campus of the Copperbelt University in a Co-sex accommodation in Zambia, during the academic year 2018 / 2019. Probability sampling was used in this study with all students having equal probability of being included in the sample; in this regard the technique which was employed was stratified random sampling. Each of the four hostels in KCMU was considered as a stratum. Adopting proportionate stratified sampling the sample size for this study equaled 250 respondents.

A closed-ended and self-administered questionnaire was used for obtaining the student's opinions in this study. Approximately 80 questionnaires were distributed to each hostel. The information provided by the Dean of student's office was that they were nearly 560 students on Campus during 2018 / 2019 academic year.

The respondents were asked to choose their answer from a 5. point **Likert scale [1-5]** which was constructed as follows:

1. Highly Not
2. Not preferred
3. Not sure
4. Preferred
5. Highly preferred

The participants were informed on the purpose of the study and were also assured on the confidentiality of their responses.

RESULTS OF DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

The total numbers of questionnaires distributed were 320, those returned were 270 and those that were usable were 250 which gave a 92.59 percent response rate. Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS version 23. Table 1. Shows that they were 40 percent of females in the sample over male students who accounted for 60 percent of the 250 respondents.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics on respondents.

VARIABLE	VALID[%]
GENDER	
Male	60
Female	40
YEAR OF STUDY	
First-year of study	40
Second-year of study	07
Third-year of study	22
Fourth-year of study	31

STUDENTS PREFERENCES

The aim of this study was to examine student's preferences towards some important aspects of their accommodation in the halls of residence. For an interpretation of the mean values, the mean score below 1.39 is equal to Highly Not preferred, 1.4 and 2.39 is equal to Not preferred, 2.40 and 3.39 is equal to Not sure, 3.40- 4.39 is equal to preferred and the mean value greater than 4.40 is equal to Highly preferred.

The mean and standard deviation for each hall of residence is presented in Table 2. It is clear that the student's preferences for residing in gender-specific hostels [Mean= 3.52, SD = 0.77] is noticeably higher than Gender-Specific floors [Mean=2.21, SD= 0.87]. Student's preferences to be accommodated in gender-specific halls of residence rated as preferred while the preference for Gender-Specific floors rated as not preferred. It is interesting to note that students rated as "preferred" to be accommodated in all floors co-education, but individual living flat-lets in which there are two rooms and four roommates are single-sex gender [Mean = 3.47, SD = 0.83], all floors co-education, and students have the option of staying in a co-education living unit [Mean = 3.42, SD = 0.99]. It is also noted that students rated as "preferred" to live in a University hostel, [Mean = 4.52, SD = 0.75], than living in a boarding house [Mean = 2.31, SD = 0.81]. The results indicated that students preferred residing in all floors – co-education but individual living flat-lets.

Table2. Mean and Standard deviation [SD] for other factors.

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS	N	MEAN	SD
Gender-Specific hostel	250	5.52	0.77
Gender-Specific floors	250	2.21	0.87
All floors are co-ed, but individual living flat-lets (two rooms and four roommates are single-sex gender)	250	3.47	0.83
All floors co-ed, and students have the option of staying in a co-ed living unit (shared flat-let)	250	3.42	0.49
Comfortable Living in boarding house	250	2.31	0.81
Living in the University hostel	250	4.52	0.75

Student differences on their preferences based on gender

Independent t-test samples were used to compare male and female student preference as shown in Table 3. Although female students had a greater desire for living in a gender-specific hostel [Mean = 3.57, SD = 0.88], when compared to male students [Mean = 3.43, SD = 0.88] the difference was not statistically significant $t[248] = -1.79, p < 0.056$. This indicates that both male and female students have similar opinions concerning gender-specific hostels. Interestingly there was a significant difference between males and females on their preferences for residing in Gender-Specific floors $t[248] = 2.09, p < 0.04$. It noted that male students [mean = 3.45, SD = 1.00] preferred to living in Gender-Specific floors than female students [Mean = 3.40, SD = 0.95].

No significant differences $t[248] = -2.12, p < 0.0655$ were found between male [Mean = 3.43, SD = 1.00] and female students [Mean = 3.48, SD = 0.98] responses. They were approximately the same in their preferences for living in all floors Co-education, but living in flat-let. However a significant difference $t[248] = -4.32, p < 0.000$ was found between male and female students on their desire for all floors Co-education, and students have other options of staying in Co-education living unit. Male students had significantly higher preferences for residing in Co-education, and have the option of staying in Co-education living unit [Mean = 3.51, SD = 0.93] than female students [Mean = 3.49, SD = 1.02].

A significant differences $t[248] = -2.63, p < 0.000$ was found between male [Mean = 3.51, SD = 0.98] and female students [Mean = 3.43, SD = 0.92] responses. They were approximately the same in their preferences for living on campus. However there was no significant difference $t[248] = -2.61, p < 0.0678$ between male and female students on their desire to living in a boarding house.

Table 3. Independent sample t-test

	Descriptive statistics				t	P
	Male (n=150)		Female (n=100)			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Gender specific hostel	3.43	0.88	3.57	0.88	-1.79	0.056
Gender specific floor	3.45	0.1	3.40	0.95	2.09	0.04
All floors are co-ed, but individual living flat-lets (two rooms and four roommates are single sex gender)	3.43	0.1	3.48	0.98	-2.12	0.655
All floors co-ed, and students have the option of staying in a co-ed living unit (shared flat-let)	3.51	0.93	3.49	1.02	-4.32	0.000
Living in the University Hostel	3.51	0.98	3.43	0.92	-2.63	0.000
Comfortable Living in boarding house	3.58	0.91	3.51	0.83	-2.61	0.0678

Table 4: One-way ANOVA

	Sum of squares	df	ms	F	significance
Gender specific hostel					
Between groups	18.901	3	6.436	7.71	0.000
Within groups	563.637	247	0.654		
Total	583.427	250			
Gender-specific floor					
Between groups	1.549	3	2.03		0.039
Within groups	709.248	247			
Total	710.706	250			
All floors are co-ed, but individual living flat-lets (two rooms and four roommates are single sex gender)					
Between groups	8.702	3	42.97		0.000
Within groups	723.361	247			
Total	732.107	250			
All floors co-ed, and students have the option of staying in a co-ed living unit (shared flat-let)					
Between groups	1.447	3	0.47		0.714
Within groups	516.238	247	0.68		
Total	517.685	250			

The results of one-way ANOVA test in Table 4. Showed significant differences in the preferences between student, year of study and their need for gender-specific hostels [$F(3,448)=7.71$, $P=0.000$]. Post hoc comparisons using the least significant difference (LSDs) test revealed that the mean score for 1st year of study students (mean=4.49, SD=0.82) was significantly higher than that of fourth year (final year students (mean=2.48, SD=1.03). From the questionnaire it was discovered that first-year students prefer gender-specific hostels because it give them a better experience of campus life. Students at different years of study did not differ differently for their preference for the type of hostel facility.

The one-way ANOVA test in Table 4. Showed a significant difference between students' year of study. On their preference for gender-specific floors [$F(3,488)=2.03$, $P=0.0039$]. Tukey test was used to check which means were significantly different. The mean score 1st year students (mean=2.00, SD 0.87) was significantly higher than fourth year (final year students) students (mean=2.56, SD= 0.778). From the questionnaire, first-year students' opinions on gender-specific floors revealed that students wanted more interaction with the opposite sex. The response from the fourth year students indicated a high inclination towards gender-specific floors. This one will help make better connections with the opposite sex.

Significant differences were found for students in the preferences. For all floors, co-education but living in flat let [$F(3,648)=42.97$, $SD=0.001$]. The mean score for first-year students (mean=2.87, SD=0.79) was significantly higher than that of fourth year students (final year students). (Mean=2.45, SD=0.76). No significant differences were found between students' year of study and the preference for all floors co-ed; and students have option of staying in Co-education living unit.

Many studies have been conducted on student accommodation, (khozael, et al 2010; A Zeez, T and Taiwo, D 2016; Dragusin and Varsaru 2016), These and many others have reported that there are two common models of student housing; on-campus and off-campus student accommodation. In a research done in a sample of 33 universities in North America, Europe, Latin America and Africa by Sanyal (1995), most of these were offering on-campus accommodation in varying percentages.

The Kapasa Makasa university campus provides on-campus accommodation with facilities reflected in table 3. When asked about their satisfaction regarding living in the university hostels, 163 out of 250 respondents were very satisfied, 61 were satisfied and 21 were slightly satisfied. Only 6 indicated that they were not satisfied.

When the study asked the students on the convenience of the on-campus accommodation, the majority stated that on-campus accommodation was very convenient. Out of the 226 respondents who expressed their views on this model of accommodation, 167 stated that it was very important. This was so because it allowed for late-night study, peer consultation and socialization. Out of the 250 who responded on the convenience of late-night study, 215 affirmed that it was one of the advantages of staying on campus. For peer consultation, 203 out of 247 stated that it was an advantage, while for socialization, 214 out of 249 affirmed that it was an important factor when one was accommodated on campus.

When respondents were asked about the hostel allocation they preferred, whether gender-specific or co-education hostels, most of them rejected the option of gender-specific hostels. Out of the sample 248 respondents, 195 did not prefer the option. Only 43 preferred the option. The rest were not decided. The other question the study asked was whether students preferred gender-specific floors; one floor male and one floor females. At Kapasa Makasa University hostels are not gender specific. They are co-education. It is the floors that are gender specific. The status quo was preferred.

Another option was where all floors were co-education, but individual living flat-lets (two rooms and four roommates were single sex gender). Strangely enough, this too was preferred. Out of 224 respondents 128 preferred this option. What made it a preferred arrangement was the option of males and females living separately in the flat-let. The arrangement where all floors should be co-education and student have the option of staying in co-education living unit (shared flat-let) was mostly rejected. Out of 235 respondents, 132 rejected the option and only 72 preferred the idea and the rest could not state their option

2. Respondents' views on Items and Facilities offered in the hostels.

Table 2 shows the respondents views on various facilities and items they felt were important to their stay on campus. According to the respondents, study room facilities are very important. Out of the 252 respondents, 235 indicated that study room facilities were very important. A university that provides a study table, chair and adequate room lighting would be an ideal institution for them. This would equally be an attraction if private developers of student accommodation ensured this was provided. What is important to a university student is not just bed space, but also study facilities.

Cheng and Ning (2016) observe that hostels are not the ideal setting for studying compared to the library and study rooms outside one's bedroom, but students like to work in their rooms. This needs to be explored further so that if descriptive statistics confirm, then the efficiency of studying in the rooms should be improved to enhance their productivity. However, Azeez and Tsino(2016) report that on-campus student accommodation in Nigeria is in short supply, and yet that is what is ideal for students from low-income background. They cannot afford off-campus accommodation. This observation in this study can be applicable in many African countries, in which a large number of students are sponsored by the government because they come from low-income backgrounds. In Universities with overcrowded students, studying from rooms would not be ideal because of inadequate space for study furniture. At the Kapasa Makasa University providing furniture for studies in the rooms cannot work because of inadequate space. Furthermore, one of the challenges students listed in this study was poor lighting in the rooms, which should among other things, be worked on.

Edwards (2010) observes that most college and university students are in age group of 18-25 years. He further observes that this age group tends to be more social than any other age and have a need for affordable social situation. Consequently, when facilities are shared, it creates opportunities for students to socialize through interactions. At the Kapasa Makasa University in each flat-let, four students share a fridge, stove, sleeping rooms and together with others outside their flat-let, they share recreation facilities.

When asked about the preferred number of persons in each flat-let, out of 252 respondents, 154 affirmed that they were very satisfied, 72 were satisfied, 13 were slightly satisfied and only 13 were not happy with the arrangement. Although students are currently satisfied with the number of persons allocated to each apartment.

(flat-let), soon the situation will change. The numbers will soon change, due to the likely increase in student admission and concomitant increase in students in the limited bed spaces. For overall facilities provided in the hostels, out of the 247 respondents, 55 stated that they were very satisfied, 98 were satisfied, 68 were slightly satisfied and only 30 were not satisfied. The University provides, a bed, stove, fridge, geyser, closet, in groups. For availability of internet connectivity, out of 251 respondents, 239 stated that this was an important facility in their rooms while for cooking facilities, 226 out of 248 affirmed its importance.

For the water provision in the hostels, most students were not satisfied. Out of 248 respondents, 188 were not very happy, only 56 affirmed that they were happy. For cleanliness of the hostels, 75 out of 250 were very satisfied, 99 were satisfied, 45 were slightly satisfied and only 18 were not satisfied.

Whether student accommodation is offered on or off campus it is important to take note of what student value so much in the provided model of accommodation. For instance in this study, other things student valued so much are as shown in Table 2 and Table 4. When students are provided with accommodation whether on or off-campus they value it because it provides independence or freedom from their guardians' control. Most students have passed adolescent stage and so consequently crave freedom or independence. The study posed this question and out of 250 respondents 220 stated that it was important with 159 of these emphasizing that it was a very important part of their accommodation, 148 even preferred single bed rooms for privacy.

The availability of Internet connectivity and cooking facilities to cook their own meals was another parameter that received overwhelming support. For Internet availability, out of 251 respondents 239 stated that this was an important facility in their rooms and while for cooking facilities 226 out of 248 respondents affirmed its importance.

If the provided accommodation also had big living room in each flat-let, this would be a reasonable attraction. Out of 251 respondents 141 indicated that this would be a good addition to their accommodation.

If the provided accommodation was Off Campus, it would attract more student tenants if it was not very far from campus. This is because the tenants would be near university campus facilities and other things enjoyed by their colleagues on the on campus model. Out of the 247 respondents who responded to this question 190 showed that living quarters had to be near campus.

The Kapasa Makasa campus provides on campus accommodation with facilities reflected in Table 3.

These responses could not be the same if the study were conducted in other two main government universities in Zambia where facilities were below the minimum student expectation. Kapasa Makasa university infrastructure and facilities are not yet gone far below most student satisfaction.

Out of 247 respondent for overall facilities provided in the hostels 55 stated that they were very satisfied, 98 were satisfied, 61 were slightly satisfied and only 30 were not satisfied. For cleanliness of the hostels, 75 out of 250 were very satisfied, 99 were satisfied, 45 were slightly satisfied, and only 18 were not satisfied.

On average most students were satisfied with the overall facilities provided in the hostels. Only in case did the respondents express very strong positive or negative emotions on the facilities provided.

When asked about the number of persons in each flat-let, out of 252 respondents 154 affirmed that they were very satisfied, 72 were satisfied 13 were slightly satisfied and only 13 were not happy with the arrangement.

For the water provision in the hostels, most students were not satisfied. Out of 248 respondents 188 were not very happy, only 56 affirmed that they were happy.

A dichotomous question was raised in which the respondents were to indicate whether or not they would prefer off campus accommodation in boarding houses. Out of 230 respondents, 204 did not like the option while only 26 would go for the option.

Sometimes boarding houses have a stigma of being second rate accommodation with scarcity and second rate facilities. The study asked the respondents if they would still reject high rental first class hostels if they were constructed. Out of 244 only 44 showed interest the other 200 rejected the option.

On-Campus versus Off-Campus model of accommodation

Whether student accommodation is offered on or off-campus, it is important to take note of what students value so much in the provided model of accommodation. If the accommodation was off-campus, it would attract more student tenants if it was not very far from campus. This is because tenants would be near university campus facilities and other things enjoyed by their colleagues in the on-campus model. Out of the 247 respondents who responded to this question, 190 showed that off-campus living quarters had to be near campus.

In Belgium, a study conducted by Verhetsel et al (2016) reports that in that country, there is an increasing number of students who prefer individualized housing. This would secure increased privacy. This desire obviously would lead such students to opt for expensive off-campus accommodation. In the research at Kapasa Makasa University, a question was asked about the respondents views on first-class off-campus hostel accommodation. Out of 244 respondents, only 44 showed interest, the other 200 rejected the option. Verhetsel et al (2016) noted that students for whom the quality of housing was a priority, living off-campus were a better option. Some would prefer accommodation near local shops or closer to the city centre. Statistical Findings Of Student Preferences On Model Of Accommodation.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

The aim of this research was to generate data on students' preferences on the type of accommodation currently offered and the desirability of facilities not yet offered. The findings from primary data firstly show that most students are happy to live in the four hostels on campus, but with varying desires of satisfaction. Secondly, for overall facilities provided in the hostels a large number of students are satisfied with varying levels of preferences. Notable major challenges from respondents were poor lighting in and outside the hostels, wrong pairing of room-mates, poor water reticulation, lack of shopping facilities and irregular maintenance of facilities. The findings on desirability of facilities that were not offered showed that if off-campus was offered, it had to be near the university. However, very few students accepted the idea of off-campus accommodation.

The *implication* of these findings are that notwithstanding the current students satisfaction about the type of accommodation the Kapasa Makasa university offers, the university should proactively adopt what has been learnt from the international scene. Among several lessons learnt are the observations that to decongest on-campus accommodation, many universities in the world are involving private accommodation developers. These developers can use the findings. At one time in the near future the Kapasa Makasa university students will have no choice but to opt for off campus accommodation.

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